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# Forest Service NEWS



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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PROPOSED DESCHUTES FOREST PLAN AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

"The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and proposed management plan for the Deschutes National Forest will soon be available for public review and comment according to Pacific Northwest Regional Forester, Tom Coston. "This plan culminates many years of effort and is the first of 19 DEIS's and Forest Plans to be proposed this year," Coston added. "These plans are intended to guide management of the National Forests for the next 10-15 years." Implementation of the proposed Deschutes Plan would result in an annual timber sell level of about 225 million board feet, a 20 million increase over present levels. "Most of this increase is necessary to harvest high risk lodgepole pine in advance of the current mountain pine beetle epidemic," stated Coston. "It's about the only way we have to economically convert these areas to productive, beetle-resistant forests."

The proposal is also expected to result in a larger population of mule deer (5,600 more) and more habitat for bald eagles. Also significant blocks of old growth forest totaling 400,000 acres (including 60,000 acres in Wilderness) will remain at the end of the 10-15 year period that the Plan will cover. Seven spotted owl management areas (outside Wilderness) totaling 8,000 acres are provided with sufficient habitat for 7 nesting pairs of spotted owls.

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Additional campgrounds will also be needed to provide opportunity for nearly 1.5 million more visitor days of recreation use annually under the proposed plan. Most campground development or expansion would be concentrated along the Cascade Lakes Highway south from Mt. Bachelor to Crescent Lake where demand is greatest. Developments could occur at other locations as demand increases.

Nearly 100 thousand acres of high potential geothermal areas outside the Newberry Crater caldera would also be available for geothermal leasing. Areas on the flanks of the caldera and portions of some roadless areas could be included in the lease offerings.

Approximately 60,000 cords of personal use firewood would remain available annually for home heating. As demand increases, the Forest hopes to be able to meet people's needs.

The DEIS and proposed Deschutes National Forest management plan will be reviewed in a series of public workshops planned for March and April. Although the exact dates and places are undecided, they will be held in Bend, Crescent, LaPine, Sisters, Redmond, Camp Sherman, and Eugene. In addition, Forest Service personnel will meet with interested individuals, groups, or organizations.

Many people who have indicated an interest will receive a copy of the DEIS and Plan or an abbreviated Reviewer's Guide in the next two weeks. Additional copies or information on the Plan may be obtained from the Deschutes National Forest, 1645 NE Forbes Rd., Bend, OR 97701 (503) 388-8561. Public comments on the Deschutes Plan must be submitted by May 9, 1986. The formal notification of availability is expected to appear in the Federal Register, a government publication of federal agency reports on activities, after filing copies are received by the Environmental Protection Agency.

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